# Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

In early 2009 I purchased a 2001 GL1800 ABS that had the stock front speakers and no rear speakers. I started looking for rear speakers and found some good ones from J & M. However, before I purchased anything, I read some posts on the www.gl1800riders.com forum where some had success using the larger-than-stock Sony “XPlod” speakers on the earlier (pre-2006) 1800s. Specifically, I found Chet Walter’s excellent website at http://www.rattlebars.com/chetswing/audiofile.html that describes in detail how to install aftermarket speakers in the earlier 1800s.

I found the Sony XSR 1343 “XPlods” at Walmart (online) for $30 a pair and thought that I would take a chance and replace the front ones with them as well as add them to the rear. The following descriptions and pictures explain my install process. Installing them requires some cutting of the plastic speaker boxes, but to me, nothing that would keep you from putting the OEM speakers back in if the Sony’s don’t work out. As with any ‘mod’, however, keep in mind that my instructions are not a guarantee that you won’t damage anything and/or hurt yourself in the process.

I have gained a lot of knowledge from the various Goldwing boards over the past few years. I used to have V45 and V65 Honda Sabres, but hip arthritis forced me to quit riding and sell them in the early 1990s. I had hip replacement (resurfacing) surgery about 4 ½ years ago which allowed me to ride again. I always wanted an 1800, but I did not want to jump right in with that kind of investment, so I bought and still have a 1985 GL1200 Limited Edition. It is one of the fuel injected 1200s that were only made in 1985 and 1986. Steve Saunder’s board at http://www.goldwingfacts.com/forums/ helped me tremendously in solving the injection problems I had with that machine. Now that I have an 1800, I want to try to contribute what I can to help others in the same way that they have helped me. This document is a start.

At the time of writing this up (April, 2009), I have the speakers installed and have ridden about 600 miles with them. They sound great to me, but I never rode it with the original front stock speakers, so I don’t have anything to compare them against. Also, I am not using an amplifier, but I may install one in the future if the speakers alone do not do the trick.

Note that I am **not** a car/motorcycle audio expert. I am just following the lead of others who were able to install these speakers in their wings. I may have unintentionally violated some unwritten audio rules with my install or you might just see better ways to accomplish what I did.

If you would like all of the photos used in this document, you may download a zip file of them from http://www.box.net/shared/sivqbqmjhn. If you have any suggestions or questions, please feel free to email me at pnorrod@hotmail.com.

Paul Norrod
Wakeman, Ohio

Photos begin on the next page.

## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

Sony “XPlod” XSR 1343 Speakers.  Speaker models are constantly changing, so in the future there is no telling what they might be called, but this was the Walmart listing at the time:

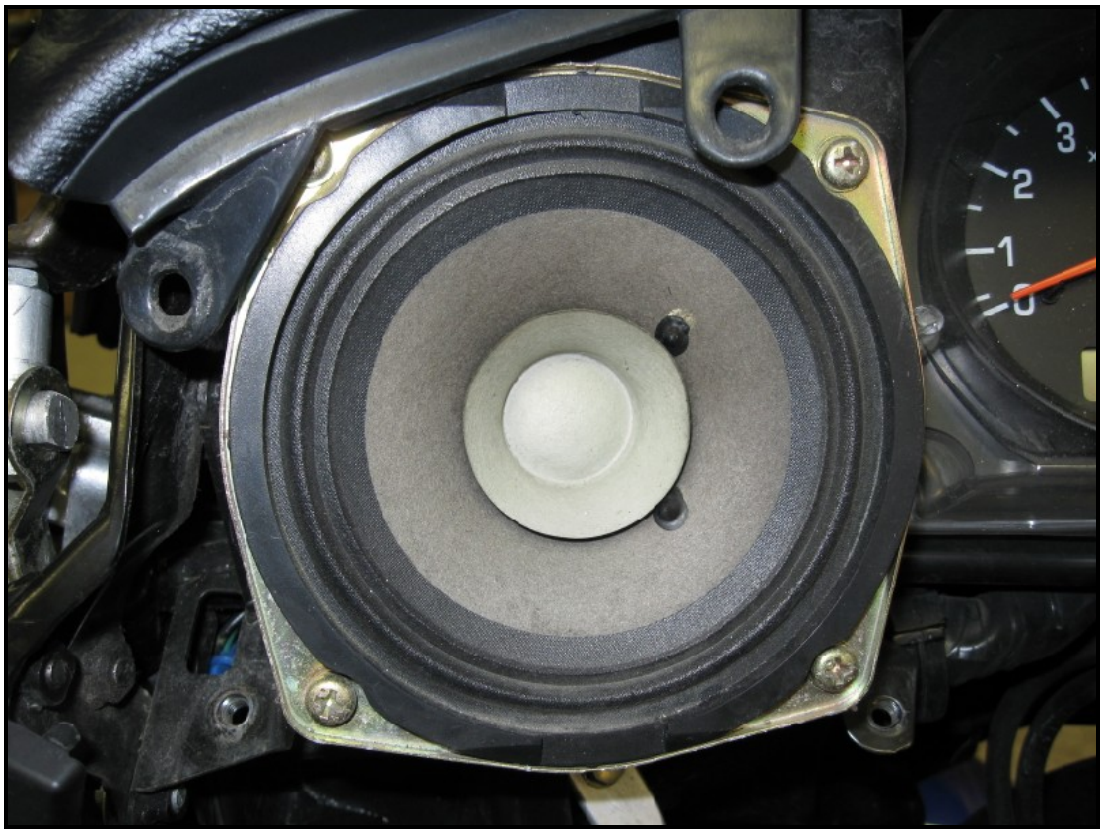
The Box and the Speakers:

SONY
5 1/4" 4way Speakers
160w Peak Power
35W Rated Power
• 5-1/4" 4Way Speakers
• High Power Handling - 160 Watts Peak
• H.O.P. cone woofer & HDLD (High Density Layered Diaphragm) mid for great linearity, smooth response & deep bass
• Dome Tweeter and Dome Super Tweeter for Accurate High-Frequency Response
• Altavoces de 4 vías de 13cm
• Alto aguante de potencia, con picos de 160 vatios
• Altavoz potenciador de graves cónico de H.O.P. y sonidos medios de HDLD (High Density Layered Diaphragm) para proporcionar óptima linealidad, respuesta uniforme y graves profundos.
• Diafragma de capas de alta densidad
• El altavoz de agudos de cúpula y el altavoz de agudos superior de cúpula ofrecen una respuesta de altas frecuencias predsandos.
XS-R1343 4WAY SPEAKER ALTAVOZ DE 4 VÍAS
Sony Corporation
Made in China / Hecho en China
3-878-849-
Xplod

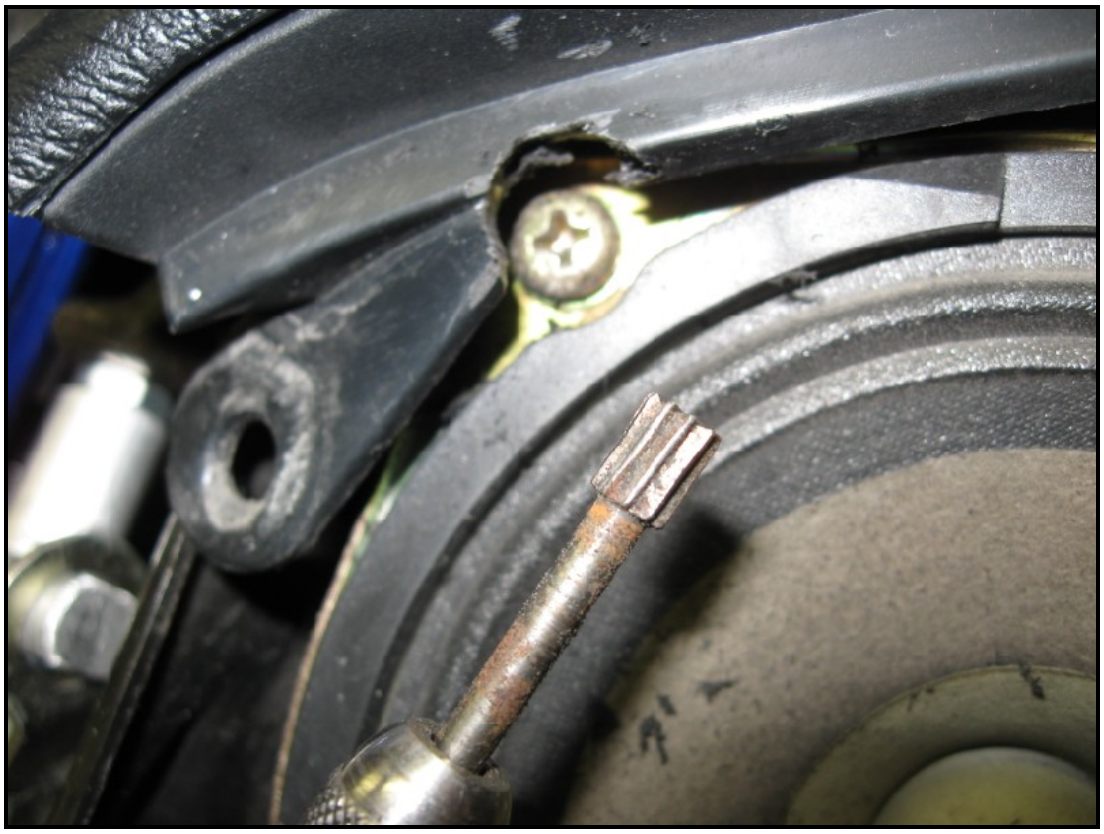
# Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

# Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

**INSTALLING THE FRONTS** OEM Front Left Speaker:

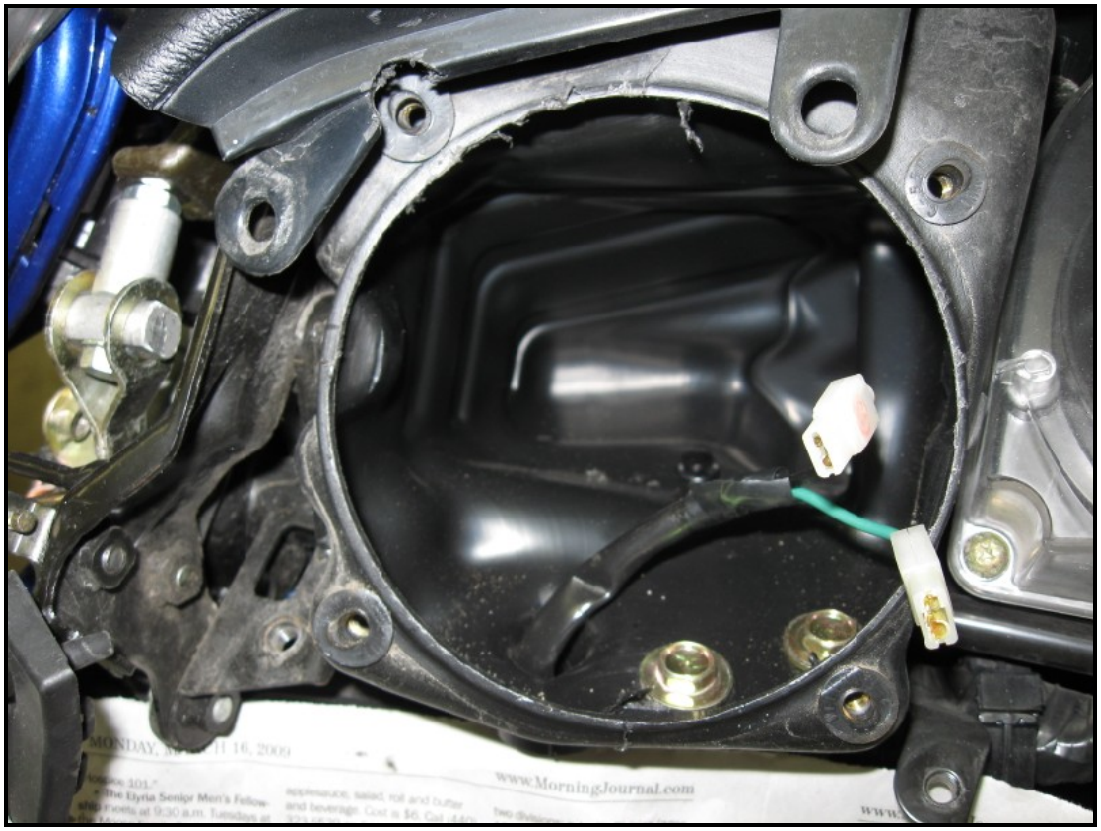


I used my rotary cutter to open up the plastic to get at the top left screw:



## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

Stock Front Left Speaker Box with Speaker Removed.  You will need to cut the opening out until the circle nearly touches the screw holes:

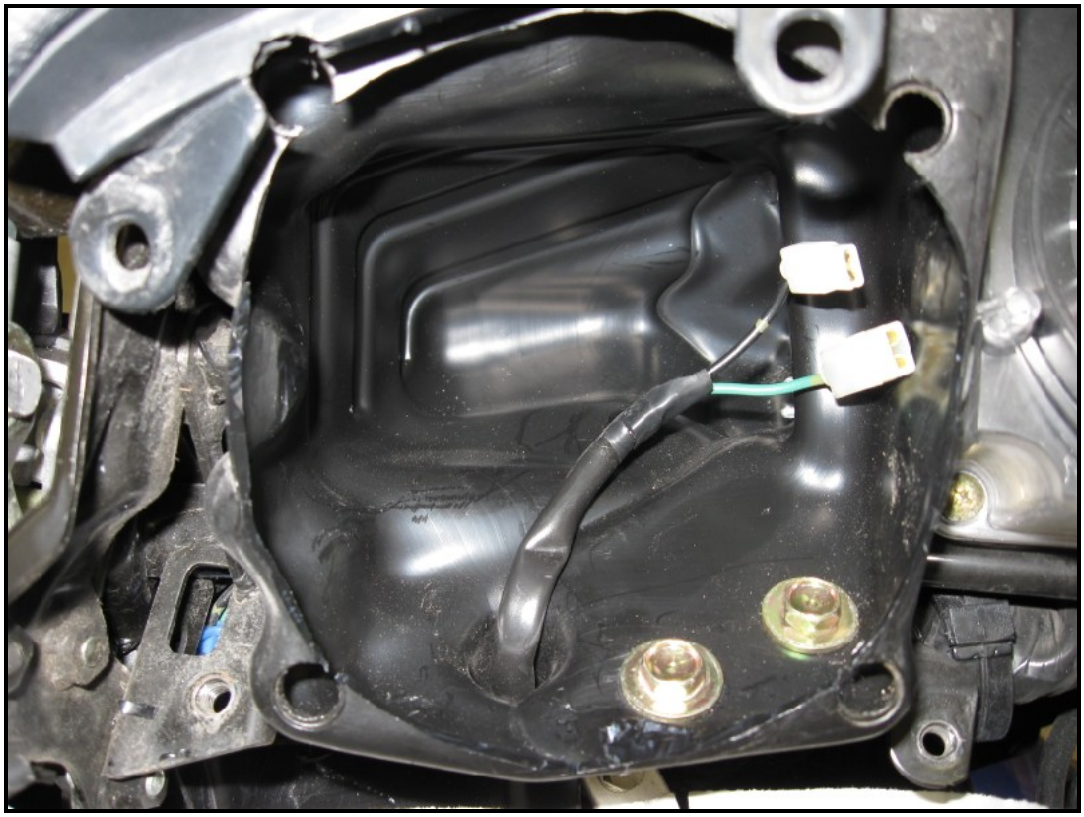


Before you cut, it makes things easier if you push out the rubber inserts that hold the nuts.  I partly screwed the screw in and pushed in on it while also using a small screw driver to push it out:

## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

Now comes the hard part.  Not because it is particularly difficult, but because it involves carving \\\on your beloved Wing.  I used a sharp utility knife to open up the speaker opening:

The result is certainly not a thing of beauty, but it will allow the 5 ¼ “ speakers to fit:



## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

You will need to trim the ends off the screw slots so they don’t interfere with anything:

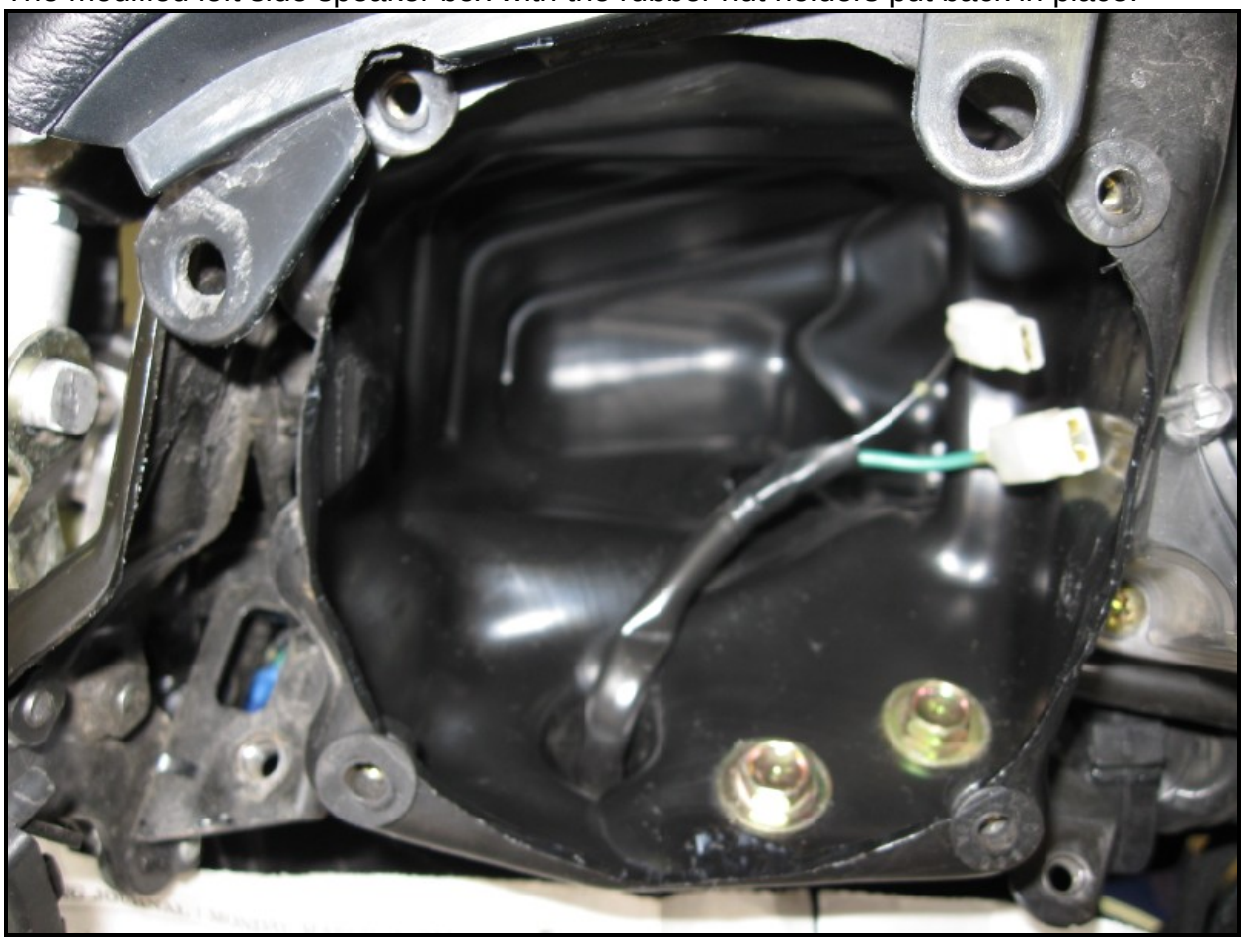
I used “tin snips” similar to these to do the metal cutting/trimming:

I used a round metal file to extend the speaker screw slots closer to the center of the speaker. It turned out to be easier and more precise than trying to use a rotary cutter (like a Dremel):

You will want to try to cover the speaker with a rag while you are doing the filing. Otherwise the filings will stick to the speaker magnets and they are difficult to clean off. No matter how careful you are, though, you will still end up with some filings stuck to the big magnet AND in the center cone on the front of the speaker. I was able to gently blow what was stuck to the cone with compressed air. Be careful, however, because too much pressure can damage the cone:

The finished slots. Note that after I had already slotted them I found that you can slightly angle the screws outward and/or to the side so that the slots do not have to be so deep for the screws to fit into. This is because the nuts in the speaker box that the screws screw into sit in a rubber holder that can be flexed somewhat. Note that I also filed a little slot at about the 9:30 position to allow the plastic fastener for the dash cover to fit in properly. It turned out that that slot was not needed because the fastener cleared it, plus when I screwed the speaker down, the slot I cut did not line up where the fastener went anyway:

The modified left side speaker box with the rubber nut holders put back in place:



I put some duct tape over the large hole where the speaker wire comes into the speaker box. My understanding is that the less openings for the sound to exit, the more there is to come out the front:

## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

Filling the empty space in the speaker boxes with some sound absorbing filler is supposed to make the speakers sound better. There is special speaker fill you can buy, but I did not want to try to find any of that. So, I bought this at Walmart for about $3.00. There is probably enough fill in the bag to do the front and rear speakers for 10 wings:

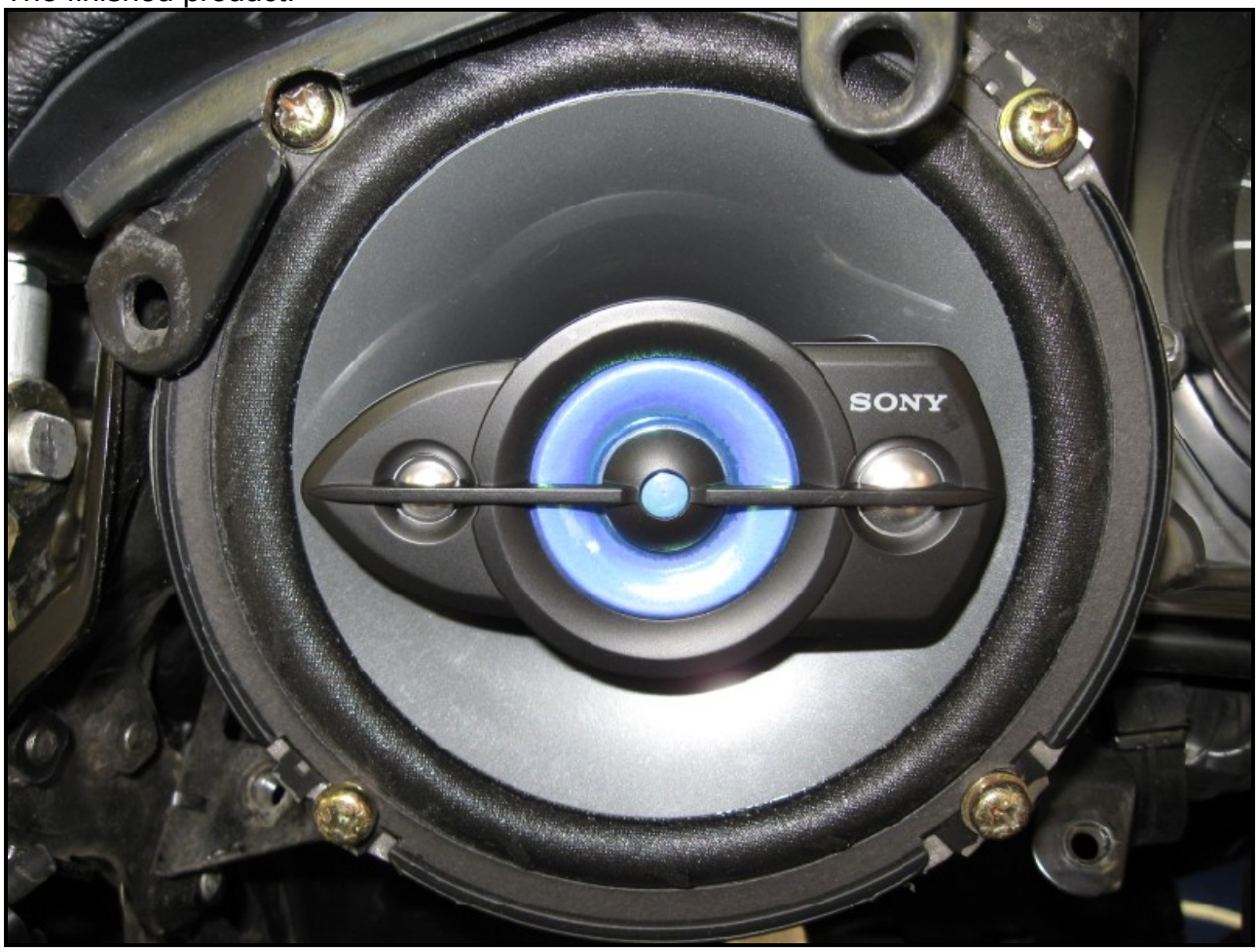
poly-fil
100% fibra para relleno de poliéster de gran calidad
100% Premium Polyester Fiberfill
Absolutely the best performing fiberfill for dolls, stuffed toys, pillows and crafts.
The best just got better!
16 oz.
Superior resiliency
Non-allergenic

I wasn’t sure how much should be packed in there. I put enough in so that I could easily push the speaker in place. Note that you will need to squish the connectors slightly with pliers to get them to fit snug on the spades on the Sony’s:

## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

In order to make sure the speakers seal up against the box and that there isn’t any gap between the speaker frame and the box, I put some weatherstripping I had around the inside edge of the speaker frame:

The finished product:



And with both fronts installed. I was worried that I might have other clearance problems with the dash cover and the false tank. However, the only minor problem I ran into was that the rubber front of the false tank just above the upper vents hit slightly on the bottom of the speakers. I used a utility knife to shave some of the rubber off both sides and the false tank then fit fine.

I want to note that the speakers do not fit completely into the speaker boxes so that the flange of the speaker frame sits on the edge of the box all the way around. The speakers are simply too large and the speaker box too small for that to happen. My speakers would fit into the box up against the flange most of the way around, but there was about a quarter of the frame that would not fully seat into the box. I decided to push the speakers fully in at the top and let the bottom sit out slightly. This is okay for me since I am tall (I figured it made more sense for the speakers to be angled slightly back). It is not much of a tilt, but if you are short you might want to do the opposite. However, tilting them back is probably why the front of my shelter hit on the bottom of the speaker frames.

From a monetary standpoint, these speakers are hard to beat for $30 a pair versus the $80 - $100 you would have to pay for high quality exact-fit replacements. Plus they are larger than the OEM size speakers. The downside, of course, is that you have to do some cutting and grinding to get them to fit.

# Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

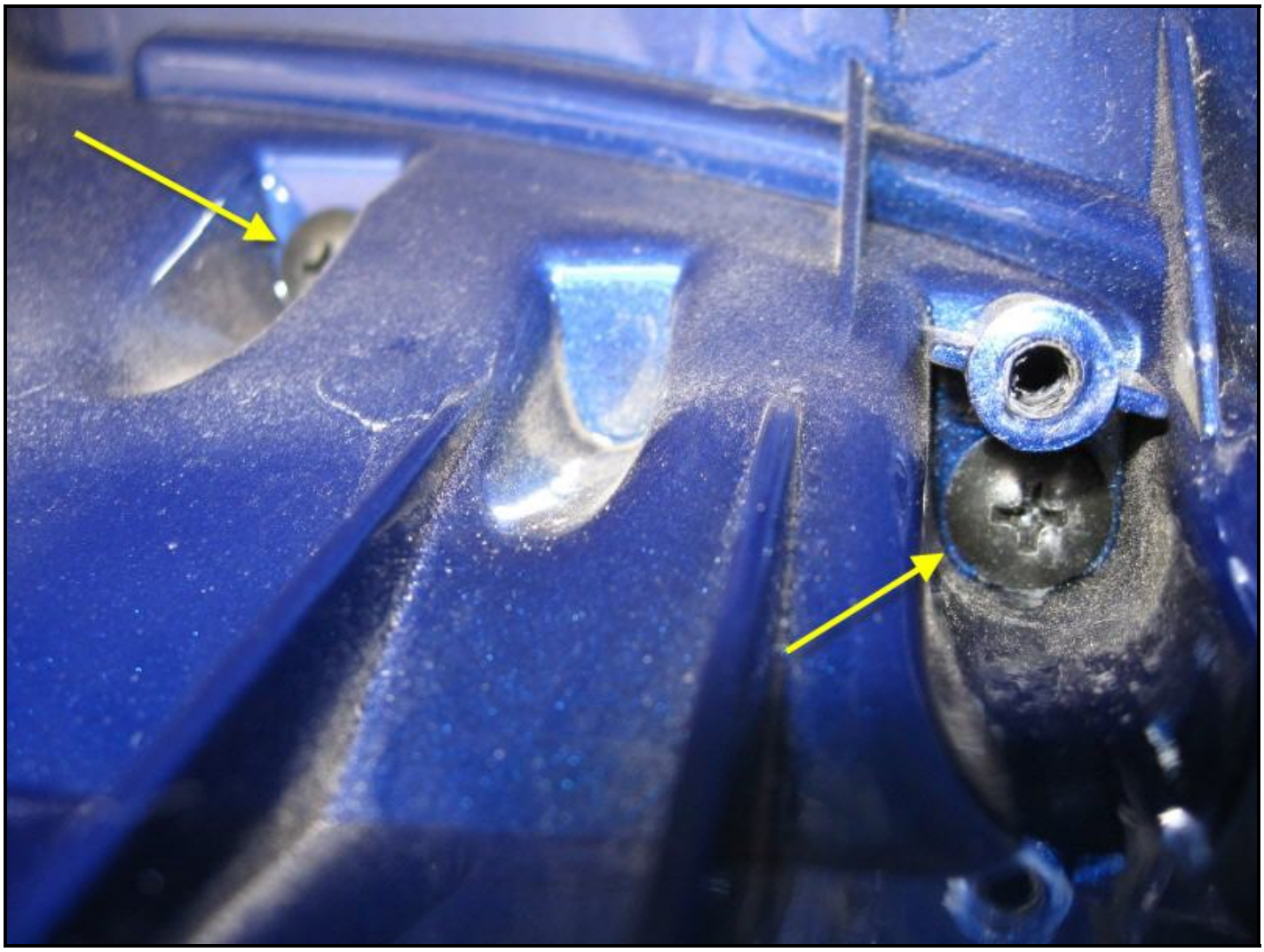
## INSTALLING THE REARS

The rear speaker pods are much more limited in space than the fronts. At first glance, it would seem that there would not be a way to fit 5 ¼ “ speakers in there. However, with some cutting and grinding, they fit in there just fine.

I did the right side rear speaker first. When I did that one, I cut and ground the speaker frame on two sides to get it to fit properly into the pod. However, when I did the left side, I got smart and realized that instead of cutting the speaker frame, I could simply cut two slots in the plastic pod for the speaker frame to slip into. Keep this in mind because I took the most detailed photos of the right-side (cut-grind) install and will cover that side first.

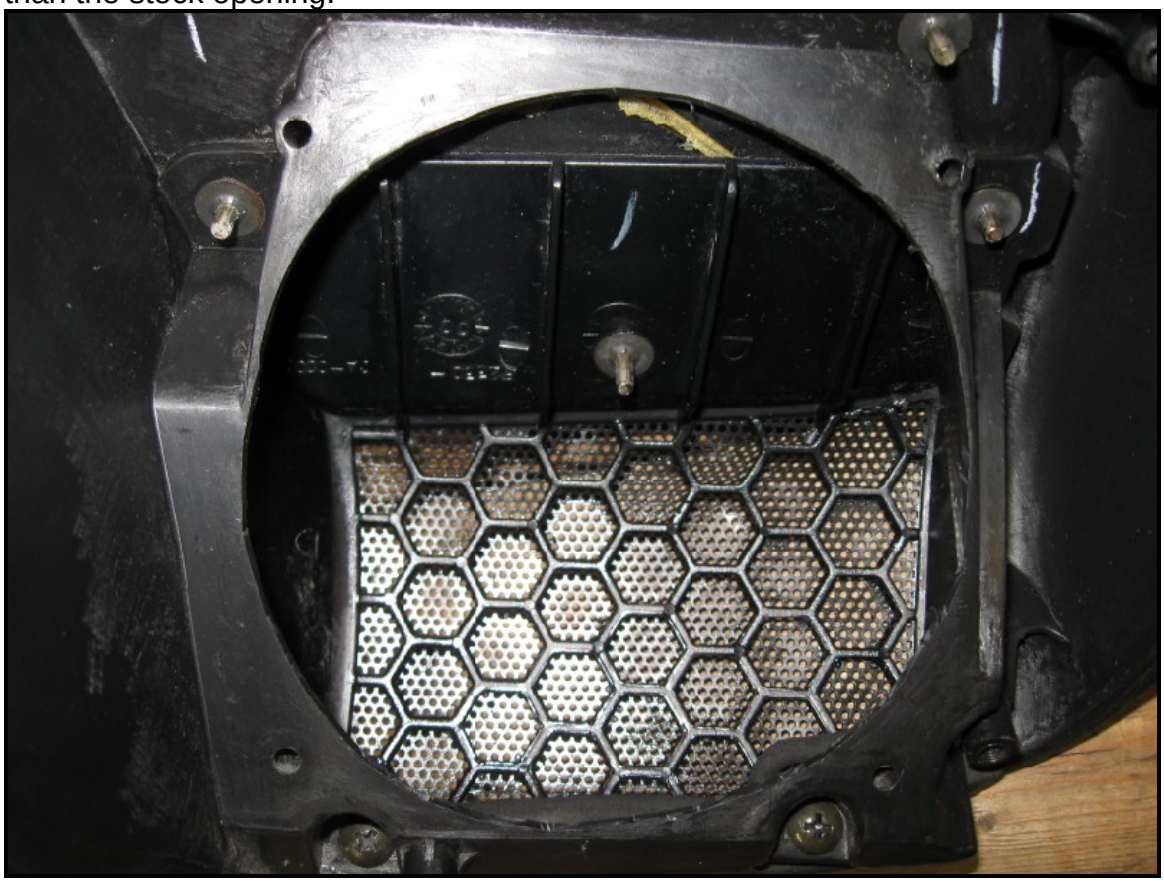
There are five screws total that you need to take out to remove the rear pods. Three of them are on the underside of the pod itself:

And the other two are behind the inner trunk lid liner (you have to take it off to get at the screws). If I remember correctly, these two screws are longer than the ones that hold the liner in, so make sure that you don’t get them mixed up with the short ones used for the liner. If you accidentally use one of the long ones for the trunk lid liner, it will probably punch a hole in your trunk lid.



The inside of the right rear speaker pod:

I used a utility knife to make the circle somewhat larger since the Sony’s are considerably larger than the stock opening:



## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

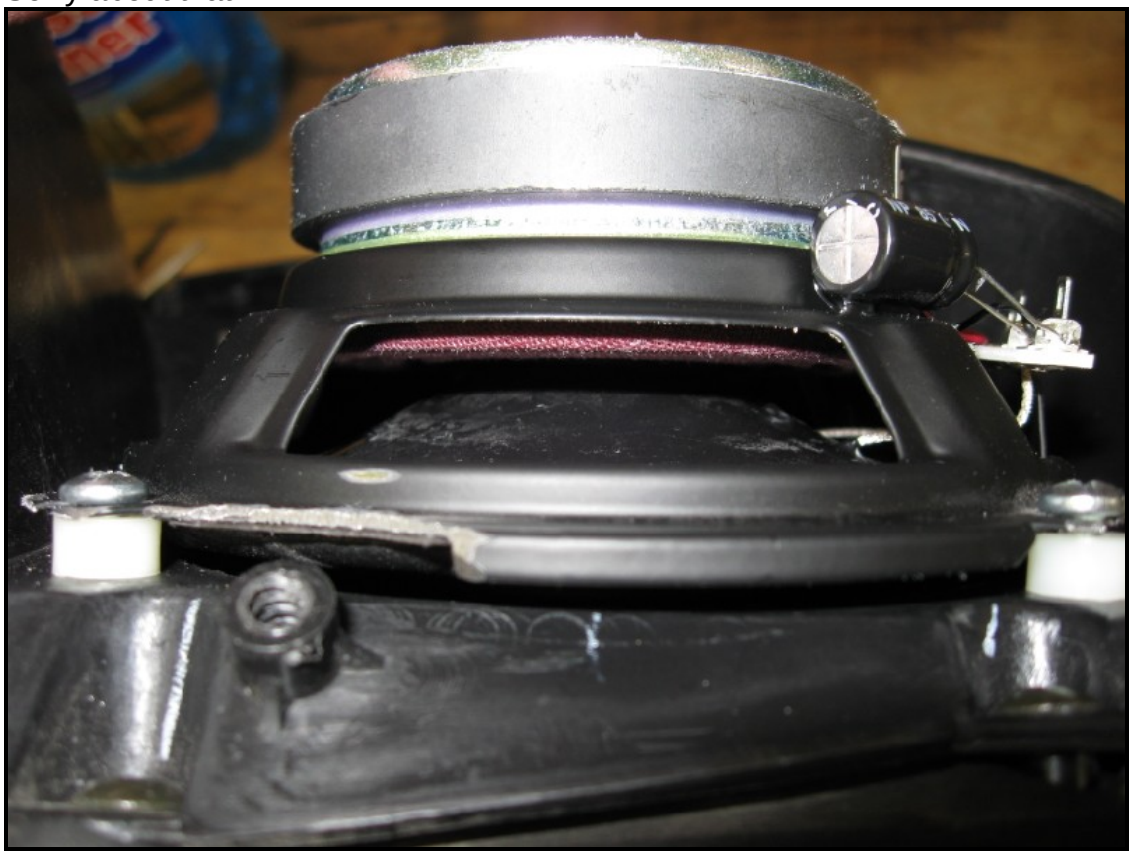
I had to cut the top and the inside of the speaker frame with tin snips so that the speaker would fit down into the pod. I cleaned up the jagged edges of the cuts with my bench grinder. When you cut the edges, it helps a lot to first snip straight through the small lip of the frame and then position the snips so that you can cut along the path you want. Be careful, though, because I don’t think it would be hard to bend the speaker frame if you get too wild with the tin snips.

Note that I to notch out the speaker frame at about the 5:30 position. This is so the speaker will clear the plastic post that is in the **base** of the speaker pod. The corresponding post in the removable part of the pod is only about ½ inch in diameter, but the post in the base that it sits into is about the diameter of a quarter. If the speaker frame is not cut out at that point, it will hit on the plastic post in the base and the upper pod will not seat onto the lower pod properly.

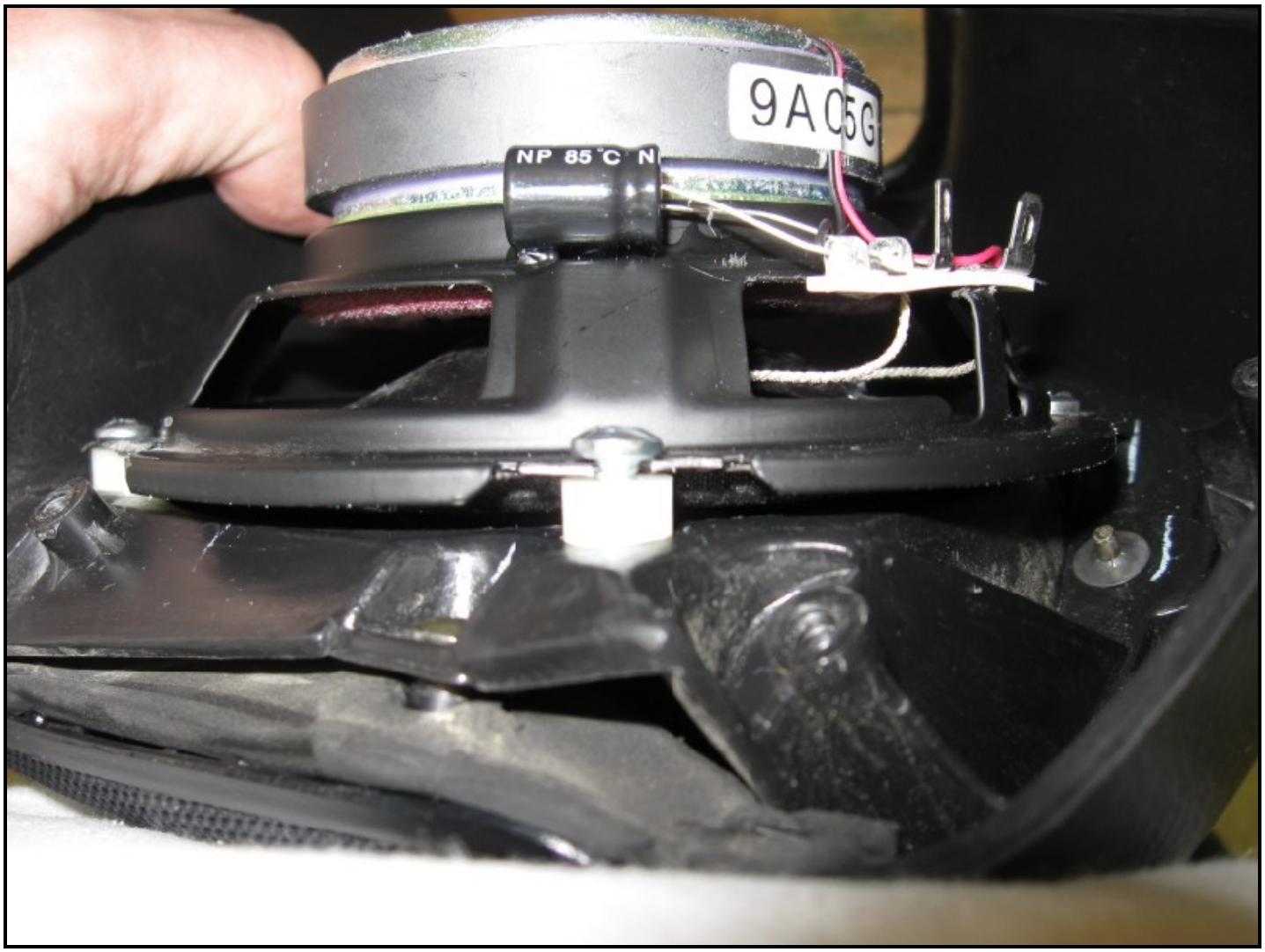
You will need to notch the speaker frame out on both speakers. The post I am talking about is where the inside front pod screw screws into (as you are sitting on the bike).

Right rear speaker after cutting/grinding:

The fronts of the speakers have a “puffy” ring around the circumference of the frame that attaches the frame to the speaker cone. If we were to screw the speakers onto the pods, we would smash that ring. I found some nylon spacers at the hardware store that made perfect standoffs so that the ring would not get smashed. I did not note the size of these standoffs. Sorry about that.



Another picture of the right rear speaker screwed into its pod using the nylon standoffs:



## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

When I started working on the left rear speaker pod, I realized that it might be easier to just cut the plastic pod to allow the speaker to fit rather than cut on the speaker frame itself. I found that cutting a simple ¼ inch high window at the top and inside of the pod allowed the speaker to seat in there without any cutting/grinding at all! This makes the rear speaker install much easier. I wish I had thought of it sooner.

Left speaker with slot in the pod at the top. It is difficult to see the slot in this photo, but you can make it out if you look closely. It is only about 1 ½ inches long:

Left speaker with slot in the pod on the inside:

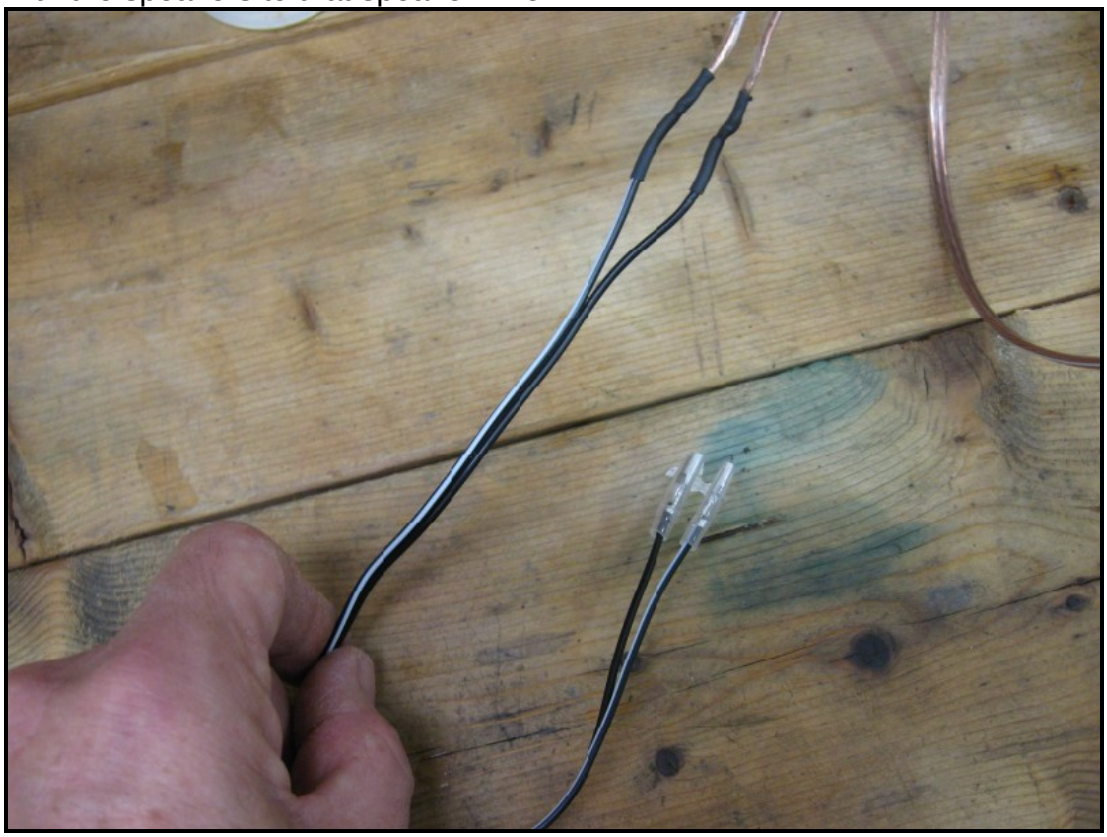
The same slot viewed from the outside. The speaker edge does not stick out past the plastic. I just covered the slot with a piece of black electrical tape:

## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

The Finished Product.  Note that on the left speaker I ground down the bottom edge of the speaker frame thinking it was hitting on the base of the pod.  However, it turned out that I did not have the notch in the frame large enough to clear the plastic post I talked about earlier:

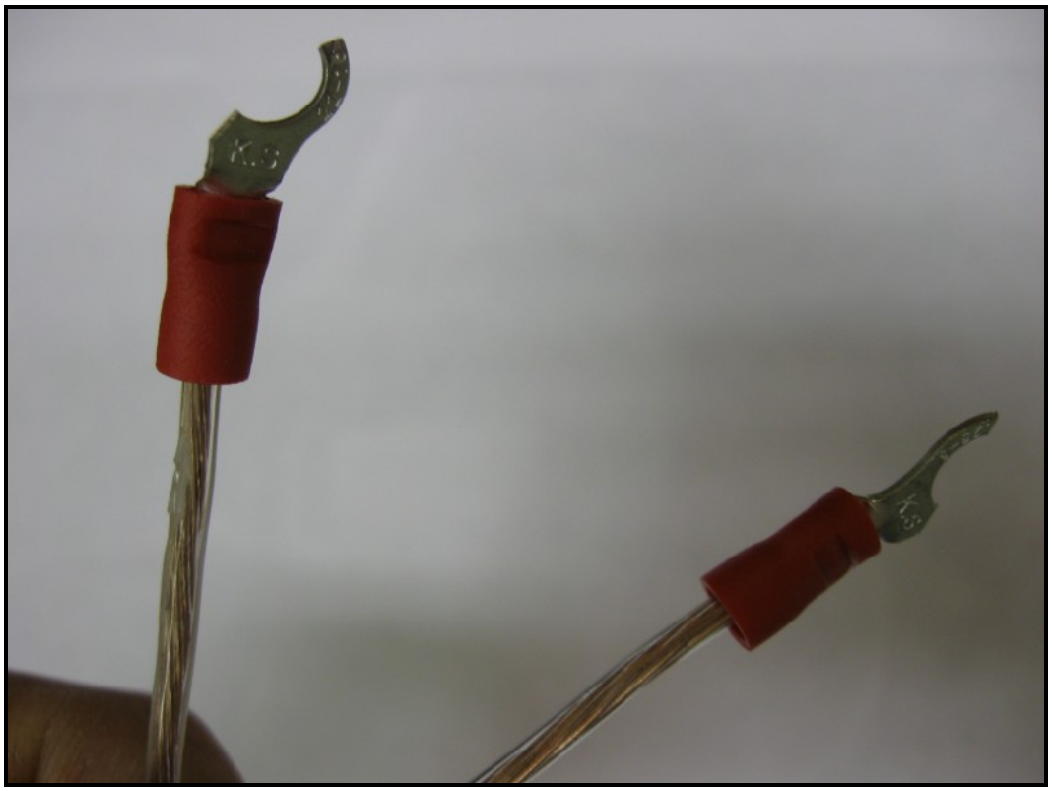
Next comes the wiring and installation:

I did not have the wiring harness for the rear speakers and I did not want to have to order one and wait around for it, so I wired them up myself (ideas mostly borrowed from Chet Walters). I already had some 18 gauge speaker wire, so I soldered the short connector leads that came with the speakers to that speaker wire:

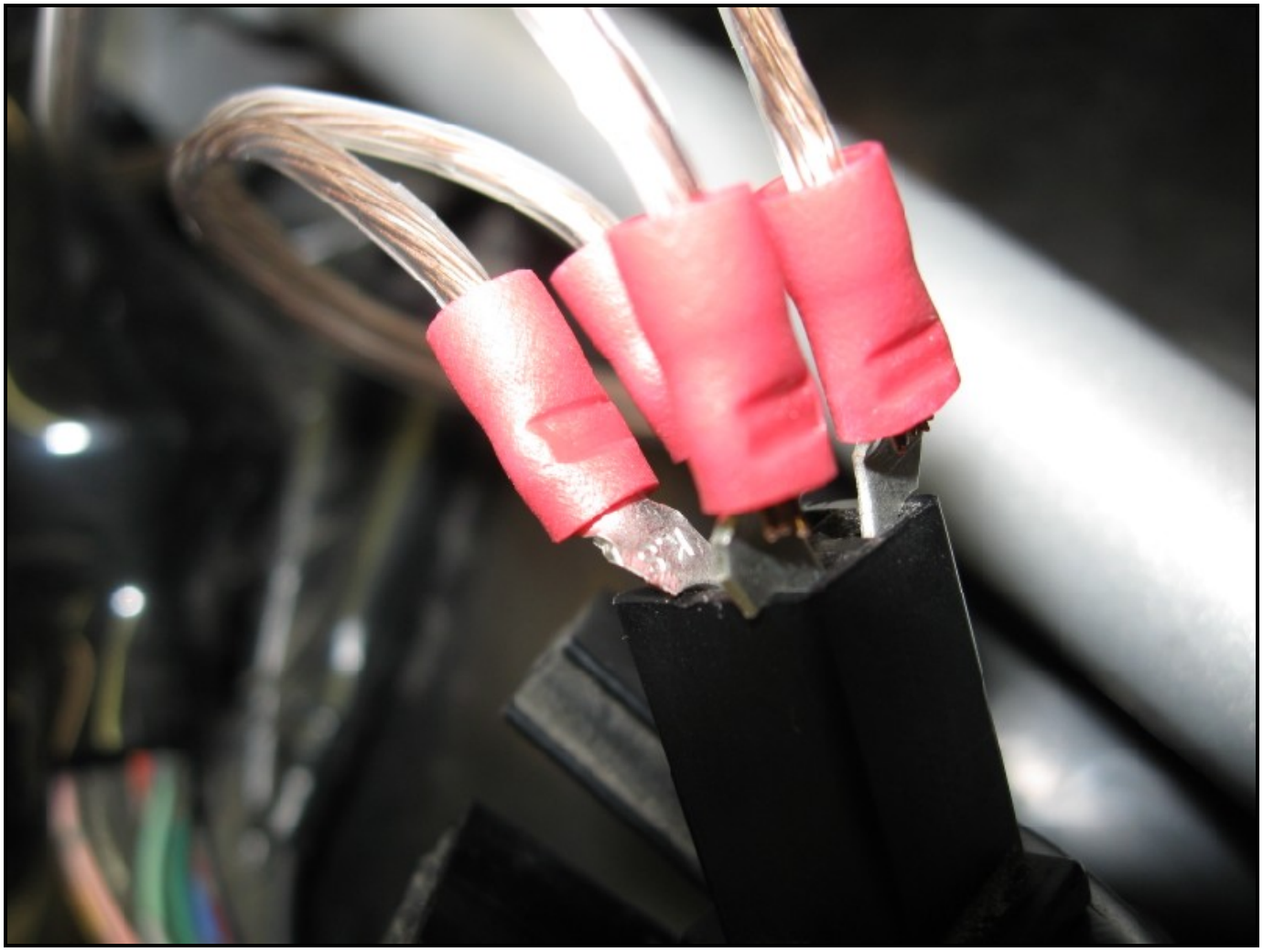


## Installing Sony XSR 1343 “XPlod” Speakers Front and Rear in a 2001 GL1800

The connector was the difficult part of the wiring. At first I tried using spade connectors, but the spade was too thick to fit into the female connector slot. I tried grinding them down a little, but (at least the ones I had) were made by folding over a piece of metal. Once I started grinding, I ended up with a “split-end” on the spade. I finally settled on using these small ring connectors and then snipped about 2/3 of the ring off so that the remainder could be pushed into the female connector slot:

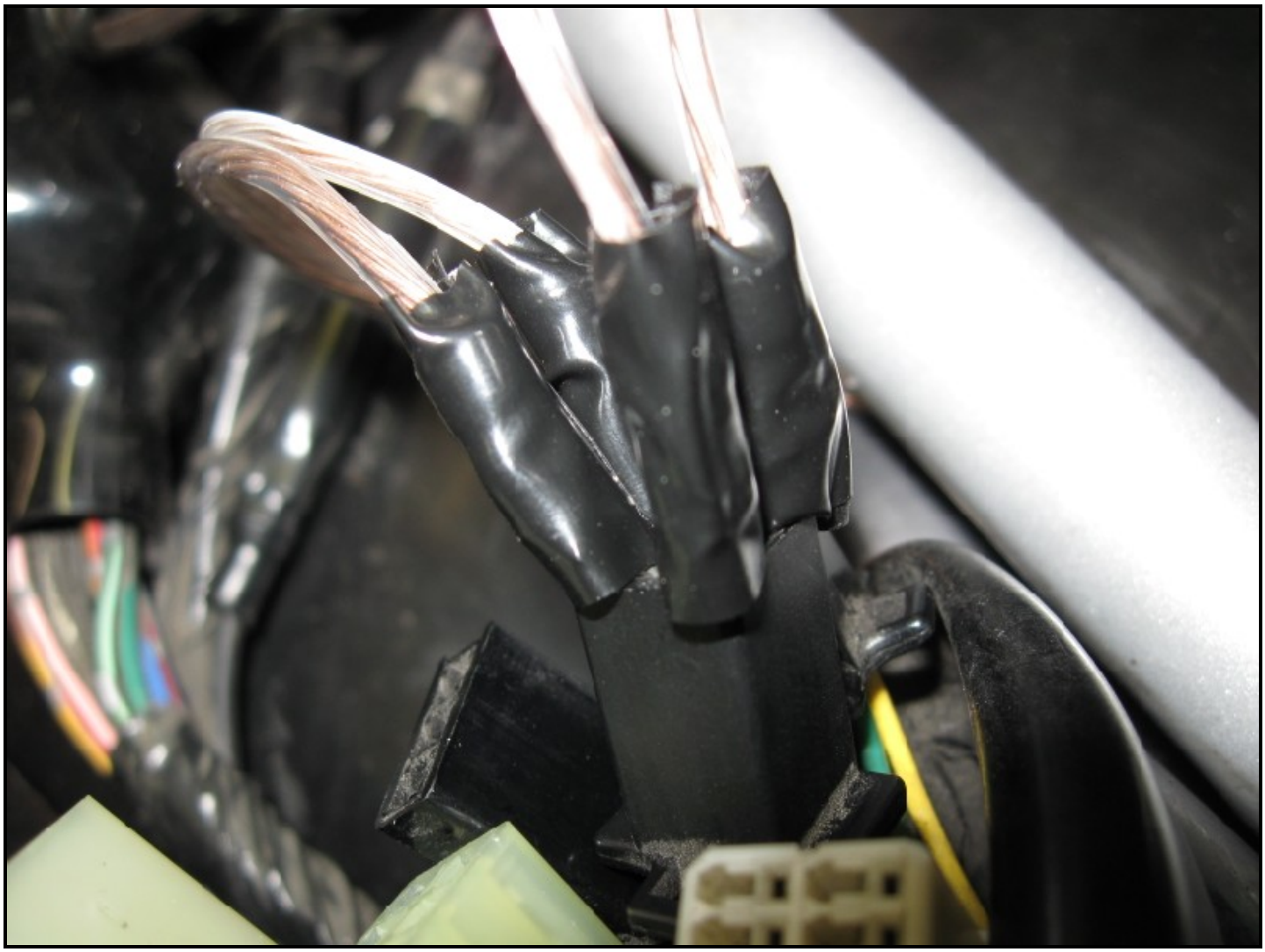


I know this looks bad, but actually they are quite secure in there and they are fairly far apart from one another”

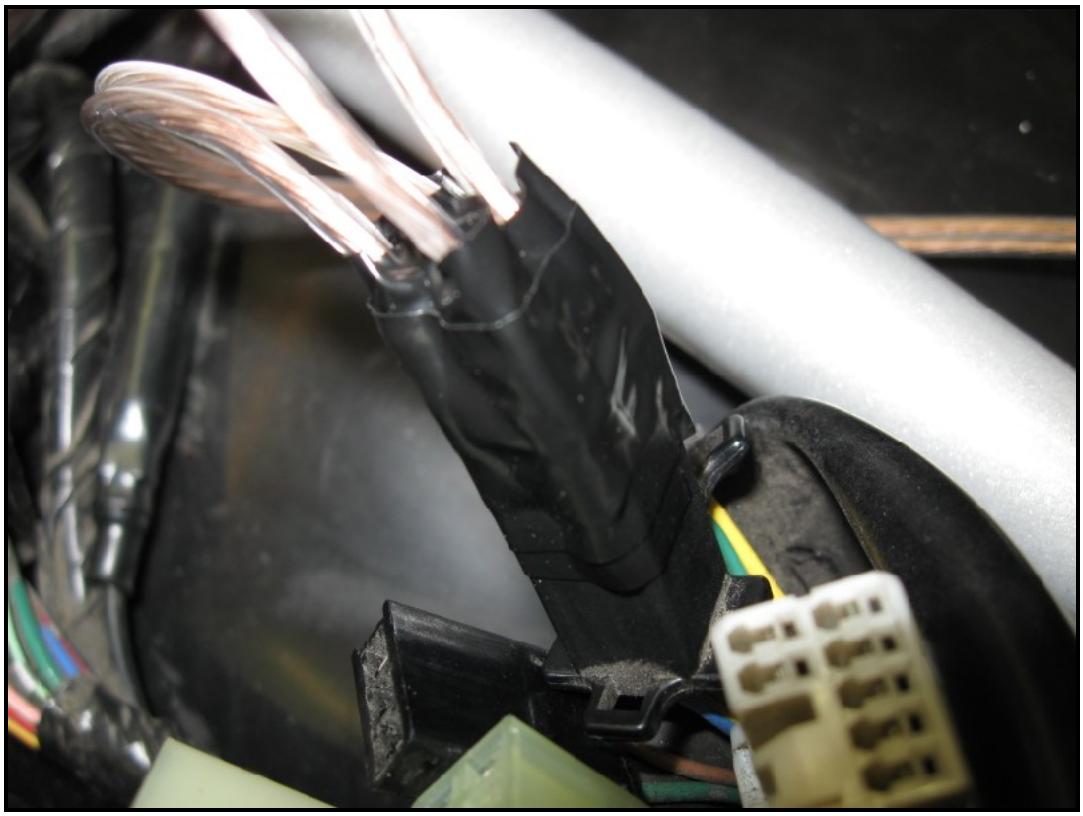


Next, I taped up the connection. I find that this tape works very well and is worth the extra couple of dollars over the generic stuff:

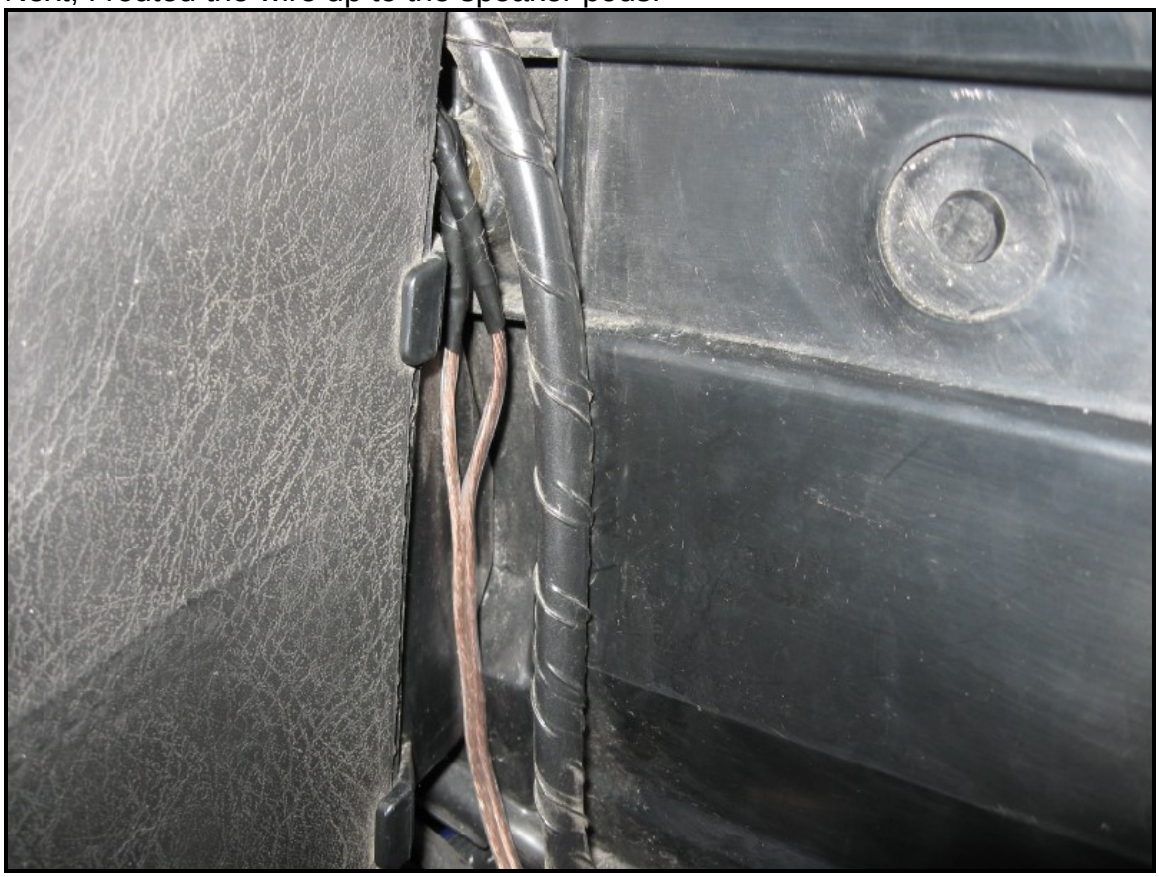
Scotch
PROFESSIONAL GRADE
GERADO PROFESIONAL
Super 33+™ Vinyl Electrical Tape
Cinta eléctrica de vinilo
• Super strong adhesion
• Indoor / outdoor use
• Adhesión súper firme
• Uso en interiores / exteriores
-0.4°F (-18°C) to/à 221°F (105°C)
MADE IN USA
3/4 IN X 66 FT x .007 IN
(19 mm X 20,1 m X 0,177 mm)
3M



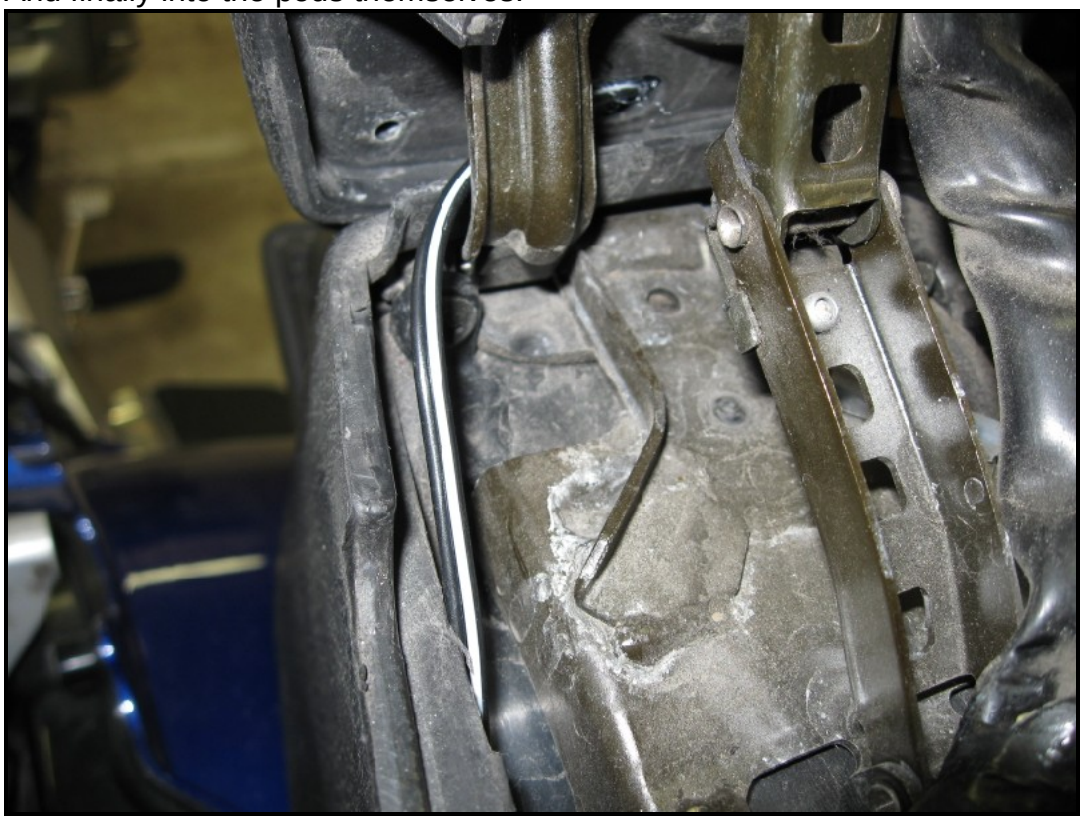
And finally.  It would have been a lot easier just to buy the harness, but I think this connection will work fine as well:



Next, I routed the wire up to the speaker pods:



And finally into the pods themselves:



When, I put the pods together, I added some of this polyester fiberfill stuff like I did for the fronts. I am not sure if it does much good. The only way to tell would be to take it out and ride without it, but I don’t want to do that:

And (drum roll, please) they are done!!!

And now all that is left to do is ride and enjoy the music: